

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for communication via a computer network, the method comprising:

registering a plurality of users with a trusted body;

said trusted body verifying the identity of each user;

said trusted body generating a random identifier for each user, ~~the trusted body~~ and keeping a confidential record of the relation between the identity of [a] each user and the random identifier for the user;

~~wherein a user can enter~~ one of the users entering into a dialogue with one or more other users by ~~means of sending~~ messages sent over the computer network and ~~via~~ through the trusted body to said one or more other users, and a user wherein said one of the users remains anonymous through use of its random identifier until such time as the user reveals its identity to one or more of the other users; and

wherein the method includes said trusted body recording the dialogue by encrypting each message of the dialogue using a public key of a private key/public key pair of the trusted body, and using the recorded dialogue together with the confidential record of the relation between the identity of a user and the random identifier to provide a means of non-repudiation of the dialogue by users.

2. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the step of verifying the identity of a user is carried out by validating a public key cryptography certificate f or a user.
3. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the trusted body verifies the suitability of a user to participate in a dialogue.
4. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the trusted body verifies the authenticity of a message sent by a user.
5. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 4, wherein the trusted body uses public key cryptography to authenticate messages sent by a user.
6. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the trusted body time-stamps all messages from users when recording the dialogue formed by the messages between users.
7. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the dialogue is in real time.
8. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the trusted body prescribes a set of rules to be followed by the users.
9. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein, the users can be any of individuals, corporate bodies, ~~organisations~~ organizations, automated machines or software applications.

10. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein a message from a user is sent to an input queue to ensure the correct order of the messages handled by the trusted body.

11. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein messages can include attachments in the form of documents to be discussed in the dialogue between users.

12. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 11, wherein the attachments are signed or watermarked.

13. (Currently Amended) A system for communication via a computer network comprising:

a plurality of distributed computer systems connected by a computer network,

a trusted body connected to the computer network,

the trusted body including:

means for verifying the identity of a user of a computer system and means for generating a random identifier for a user,

a record confidential to the trusted body of the relation between the identities of the users and the random identifiers;

means for two or more users to perform a dialogue by sending messages over the computer network and through ~~via~~ the trusted body and to each other, wherein [a] each user remains anonymous through use of its random identifier until such time as the user reveals its identity to one or more of the other users, and

wherein the ~~system includes a record of~~ said trusted body records the dialogue by encrypting each message of the dialogue using a public key of a private key/public key pair of the trusted body, and uses the recorded dialogue ~~which~~ together with the confidential record of the relation between the identities of the users and the random identifiers ~~provides~~ to provide a means of non-repudiation of the dialogue by users.

14. (Original) A system as claimed in claim 13, wherein the computer network is the Internet and the trusted body is an Internet service provider.

15. (Original) A system as claimed in claim 13, wherein each user has a graphical user interface showing the dialogue and status of the other users.

16. (Original) A system as claimed in claim 15, wherein the graphical user interface includes a means for viewing a document sent by a user as an attachment to a message of the dialogue.

17. (Currently Amended) A computer program product stored on a computer readable storage medium, comprising computer readable program code means for performing the steps of:

registering a plurality of users with a trusted body;

said trusted body verifying the identity of each user;

said trusted body generating a random identifier for each user, ~~the trusted body~~ and keeping a confidential record of the relation between the identity of [a] each user and the random identifier for the user;

wherein ~~a user~~ one of the users can enter into a dialogue with one or more other users by means of messages sent over the computer network and ~~via~~ through the trusted body, ~~and a user~~ wherein said one of the users remains anonymous through use of its random identifier until such time as the user reveals its identity to one or more of the other users; and

wherein the method includes said trusted body recording the dialogue by encrypting each message of the dialogue using a public key of a private key/public key pair of the trusted body, and using the recorded dialogue together with the confidential record of the relation between the identity of a user and the random identifier to provide a means of non-repudiation of the dialogue by users.

18. (New) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the trusted body maintains the private key of said private key/public key pair, and the step of using said private key to decrypt the encrypted messages.